obliged to get the "billet" for the baggage before they will take your money for the places, and, until you can exhibit the tickets, you are not allowed to enter the waiting rooms. Under this concatenation of circumstances, it is possible to fancy the confusion in the limited space outside the waiting-rooms. You can see them, however, if you cannot enter, and smart and spruce they look. A she "official," at the door, insists on an inspection of the tickets, and she is aided by a short, thin "official," with a cocked hat and flexible jaw. By the time you have paid for the baggage, and showed the billets to the money-taker for places, and showed the money-takers' tickets to the door-keepers, you have lost all idea of waiting-rooms, for the bell is ringing, the horn is blowing, the engine is fizzing, and—by gemini, I have forgotten my duty to THE BUILDER, and have taken no note of "the station accommodation." At Lille there was much confusion about who was for Belgium and who for Paris; no time to alight, and on again to the station within the Belgian frontier. Here all parties had to descend and unlock all packages, and the time consumed was considerable, with this and a sort of double-shuffle of the trains on the rails. As we had been travelling since the early morning, I looked about for a "ladies' room," but in vain; and, shame to say, we all had to stand about till it was our turn to deal off. Station after station was reached, and not till four o'clock in the afternoon, at Malines, was there a ladies' room to be found. Another shame on these Belgians, who are so near civilization and yet unimproved in these matters. The same want of attention to the convenience of their female passengers is manifested throughout the Belgian and Rhine railways. At Verviers there is a very large station, with a commodious building, but no ladies' room: at a distance from the platform, in a sort of garden, are built two rustic cottages, separated by a small plantation, severally inscribed *Pour les Dames*, *Pour les Hommes*, not legible, however, till blunders are frequently made.

The Germans now "take up the running," and their arrangements deserve the severest censure, for the only attention they pay to their travellers' wants, except at the very largest stations, is a small lean-to building, divided in the centre with two doors, labelled, *Für damen*, *Für männen*. At the first-class stations matters are not much better, as no ladies' room is to be found to place your ladies in safety in while you look after the baggage and carriage. The railway from Heilbronn runs through Wortemburg on to the Lake of Constance. To make any progress, you must start at six o'clock, and as the stations on the continent are generally some distance from the towns or the best hotels, this entails rising from an hour and a half to two hours earlier. Bearing this in mind, and that the train reaches the lake between four and five in the afternoon, there is no ladies' room thoughout the whole route. There are at the extreme end of the stations small places, as before described, with two doors actually acting on the same door-post, altogether an outrage on decency, and casting an undeserved indignity on one portion of the passengers. I observe in your paper how our London institutes receive foreign engineers and architects, and take delight in honouring them and showing them attention. But I protest, after the above and what follows, that it is altogether unmanly to treat with common courtesy or good feeling any of the parties engaged in any way in the omissions and commissions which are so abominable. And it is less excusable from having our station arrangements made long before theirs, and which their heads of departments must have seen.

It is only fair to state that this railway is admirably constructed, describing three-fourths of a circle occasionally, to mount an incline and overcome what, but a few years ago, would have been thought impracticable gradients. The carriages are on the American plan,—very long, and having a walk up the centre, with double seats on each side. They have four wheels at each end, two and two quite close together; and the break seems to be a simple wedge between these contiguous wheels, with the point upwards, and which is raised by a lever as circumstances require. The rate they travel at is about half our speed, and therefore these arrangements may answer, while they would be totally inapplicable with increased velocity. The passenger fare is generally very much below our tariff.

The next line we came to was between Como and Milan, and is too short to require, or deserve, particular remark, other than to say that the rooms were very prettily painted in fresco, and were well furnished; but there were no separate rooms, as before. From Milan, the railway is open to Treviglio, and thence it is being made to Verona; from which place it is open to Venice. The hiatus between Treviglio and Verona is about a day and a half's land journey, and will take a considerable time yet to complete. The station at Milan is altogether mean, and unworthy of so considerable a city. On arriving at Treviglio there were no horses to be had, in consequence of a tour the Emperor was making in that neighbourhood. We were invited very politely to wait in the "Sala" for the "prima classe." As we had to wait a very considerable time I had an opportunity to remark on the building. It must be borne in mind that this station being but 29 English miles from Milan, weary travellers must frequently arrive and have to wait for the next train. The room, then, serves for "out" and "in" passengers: it is of considerable dimensions, square, and mean. Now think a little: there is a door to arrive at, and a door next the rails, but there is no other door or outlet of any sort to any other apartment whatever. Comment is unnecessary—is the bastinado? From Verona to Venice the traffic is tolerably worked: you have too little room in the carriages, and it is inconvenient to ascend from the level of the rails, as also to descend. Indeed, it looks very unsafe and unfinished where, as is generally the case, there is no platform. Our next experience was at Naples. On arriving at Capua our carriage was detained a very long time in the town surrounded by beggars, till inquiry was made at the station whether a carriage could be taken to Naples. There were no trucks; so we posted over one of the most villanous roads in Europe. While at Naples we meditated a trip to Salerno and Pæstum, and the most practicable course is the railway to Nocera and thence by Vetturini. I wish to goodness I could have had half-a-dozen of the gentry who "write to the papers" to see how matters are conducted here. I will keep within the most exact truth, for while I like to tell my story my own way, I will not exaggerate. Some matters can only be alluded to: those who are interested must, therefore, give full force to what is said. The terminus is fair-looking enough externally. The first process is to pay at a little window as usual: then there is but one entrance for all classes of passengers, and as the fare is very low indeed, the company, consisting of a Neapolitan crowd of savory second and third classes, may better be imagined than described. But this is not all: the examination of tickets at the *one* door necessarily causes great pressure as the train is about to start. In this mob the beggars ply their profession lustily. Thus are you jammed in between people but little distinguishable from mendicants, and close to you is a loathsome vagrant in actual contact with you, soliciting charity. Once past the door, you are assigned to the several divisions to which you belong. The first class is a tolerable square apartment, without ladies' room. I went to look at the second-class accommodation. It was little better than a boarded pen with seats round it. There were a good number of passengers waiting, of both sexes. In a small garden, in full view of all, was a single sentry-box with the entrance turned from the passengers, but no door, the approach to which was altogether disgusting in the extreme. Let us get away. The train once started, we accomplish the *eighteen miles* in about *one hour and a half*. The exit at Nocera was by a door *in a corner* of an unpaved yard, so that, of course, carriages could not draw up flush to the door to take up passengers. It rained heavily, and carriages and conveyances being in request, the confusion was complete. The bawling of drivers, the want of order, the importunities of loathsome beggars, and a tall official, with a considerable cane, unmercifully *beating the drivers and touters*, made up a scene not to be equalled. Having at length got a carriage, we scrambled through the mud, touters, and beggars, grateful that we were not robbed also. Two days' experience of our driver and conductor convinced us that they were both civil fellows, working very hard for but moderate pay, and intelligent enough to follow any reasonable instructions. But the driver had wheals on his back, inflicted at the caprice of the before-mentioned official for some infraction of unwritten regulations. On our return by the same railway, at one station a gentleman got into our first-class carriage smoking a cigar, and *spat* on the carpet. It was a saloon carriage for ladies and gentlemen, and, excepting the surprise of our party, this proceeding was taken by the rest quite as a matter of course. On our return from Naples we determined to come by the railway to Capua; to do which, and to get on reasonably during the day, you must start at six o'clock in the morning. It is a regulation that carriages must be at the station one hour before the train starts. Ours was sent on in good time, and we followed about ten minutes before the train started. There was a very fine saloon for first-class passengers, but no ladies' room, as before. As we approached the train, what was our surprise to find that although the courier had been there with the carriage for an hour, it was not yet attached to the train. By dint of his swearing and bawling, at length this was accomplished, when he was surrounded by the men to be paid for what they had done. The tickets say, as ours do, the servants are paid, therefore do not pay again; yet under the very noses of the superior officers, every porter bullied the passengers to be paid for carrying the smallest portion of luggage. But the best is still to come. Having travelled at the rate of twelve miles an hour, we at length arrived at Capua. After alighting and waiting some time, the train being cleared, went off, leaving the truck on which was our carriage alone: there was no place on which to get the carriage off. A little way up the rails was an inclined plane, at right angles with the rails, and with no means whatever of communicating with the railway truck. While men were being collected to tranship the carriage, there was an opportunity afforded of observing how the latter had been kept on the truck. Four or five *stones* of various sizes had been placed under the wheels, and two or three pieces of rope had been cunningly twisted, in no order whatever, about the various accidental points of attachment. By this time sufficient strength had been collected, and the truck was wheeled as nearly as possible to the inclined plane, the latter being at an angle of 45 degrees. Then there was some wood wanted to make a bridge between them: when this was collected it became necessary to turn the carriage half round on the truck that it might come with the wheels revolving in due order. After several attempts, the various pieces of wood nearly letting the wheels through, down came the carriage with a run, and all was safe but sadly shaken. Some alacrity was shown in putting the horses to, and then began the claims of all parties for their assistance,—the railway porters, accidental helpers, and beggars for looking on. Whether there was paid as much as the whole cost of the railway charge from Naples, or the value of the carriage itself, the courier's accounts can only tell, for by this time the sweetest temper of the party had given way, and at any cost we desired to be flying homeward.

CHARLES HILL.

CONVERSAZIONE AT THE ARCHITECTURAL EXHIBITION.—The committee have issued cards for a *conversazione*, to be held at the Portland Galleries, Regent-street, on Wednesday evening, the 15th instant, and have included ladies in their invitations. It promises to be numerously attended, and will doubtless be a pleasant evening.

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